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ABSTRACT

Educational institutions, families, and communities are not meeting the educational needs of more than 50 percent of the students enrolled in public and private schools in the United States. In 1997, only 43 percent of high school seniors reported themselves to be in demanding "academic" programs, compared with 45 percent in "general education" and 12 percent in vocational education programs. While a high school education was sufficient for the demands faced by earlier generations, children of the 21st century will need at least 2 years of postsecondary education. To address the problems students and, consequently, society experience arising from lack of coordination between elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, the Triple-A Program was designed to improve alignment, raise achievement, and provide more (and more rigorous) alternatives. About 18 states already have created K-16 or P-16 councils to start integrating teaching and learning across the years. Appendices include acknowledgements; a list of meetings, guests, and speakers; lists of programs to improve alignment, to improve achievement, and that provide education alternatives; a list of papers and other materials prepared for the National Commission on the High School Senior Year; and a list of notes. (RT)

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Raising Our Sights

No High School Senior Left Behind

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Raising Our Sights:

No High School Senior Left Behind

Final Report

National Commission on the High School Senior Year

October 2001

In the agricultural age, postsecondary education was a pipe dream for most Americans. In the industrial age it was the birthright of only a few. By the space age, it became common for many. Today, it is just common sense for all.

—National Commission on the High School Senior Year

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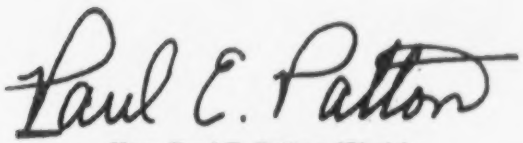
National Commission on the High School Senior Year



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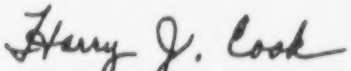

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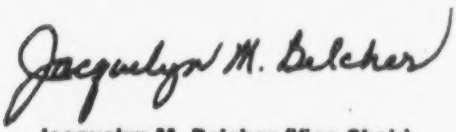

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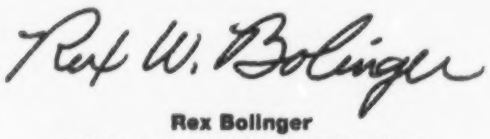

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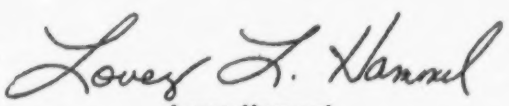

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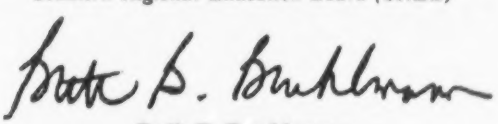

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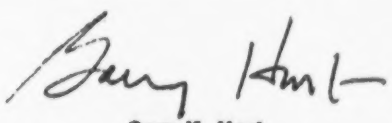

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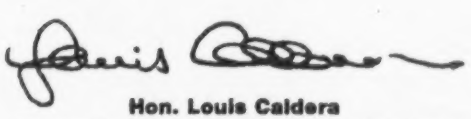

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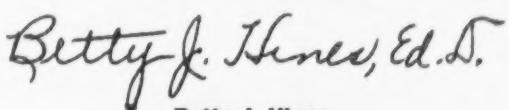

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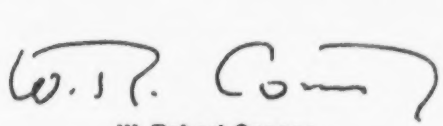

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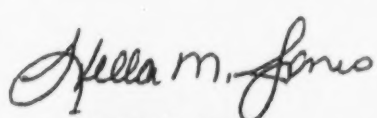

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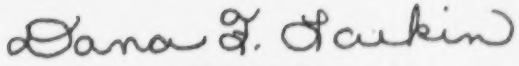

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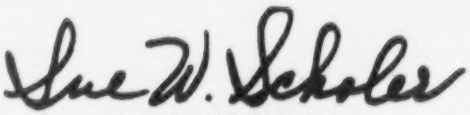

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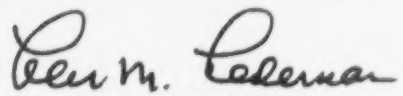

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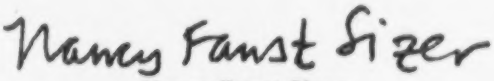

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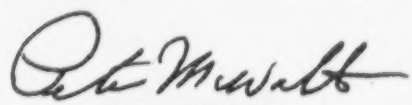

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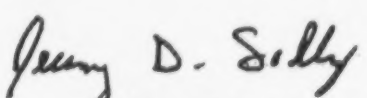

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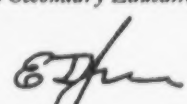

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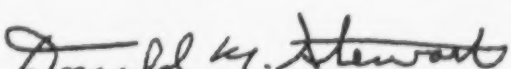

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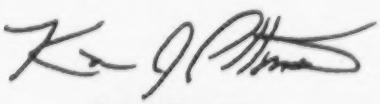

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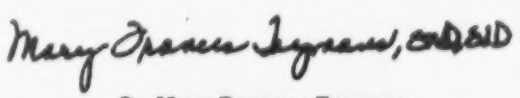

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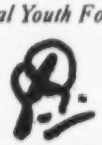

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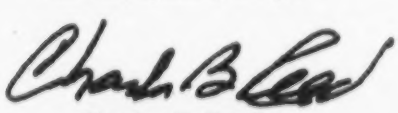

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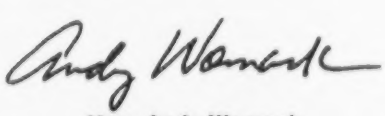

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Preface

The Commission calls for the The Triple A Program to improve alignment, raise achievement, and provide more (and more rigorous) alternatives

In June 2000, the U.S. Department of Education, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation established a partnership to sponsor the National Commission on the High School Senior Year. The sponsors asked the Commission to closely examine students' experiences in the last year of high school and recommend ways to improve them.

To advance its work, the Commission supported the development of several major papers, reviewed relevant literature, conducted eight extensive focus groups with high school graduates, examined a survey completed by one of the Commissioners, heard testimony from experts, and held three formal meetings with leading experts and stakeholders to discuss the senior year. Drawing on these efforts, the Commission issued its first report in January of this year. That report, *The Lost Opportunity of the Senior Year*, outlined the Commission's major findings; it made no attempt to present recommendations.

Since January, the Commission has used that report as the basis for a national conversation with educators, citizens, parents, policymakers, and students. The conversation was designed to obtain a sense of how the education community and the public reacted to the findings. At a seminar organized by the Education Commission of the States, the Commission also met for two hours in April with an education representative from every state. The advice received at these meetings provided direction and helped the Commission frame its suggestions on how to proceed.

In this document, *Raising Our Sights*, the Commission calls for raising the bar. This report refines the findings from the last report into a strategy the Commission calls the "The Triple-A Program" — improve **alignment**, raise **achievement**, and provide more (and more rigorous) **alternatives**. Until recently, Americans have taken 13 years of education (from kindergarten through grade 12) to be a sufficient preparation for life and work. In the emerging 21st century, all Americans will require two additional years of formal education and training at some point after they leave high school.

The "Triple-A Program" appears at a particularly opportune time. Congress and the White House are near agreement on the President's "Leave No Child Behind" program, directed primarily at low-income students in elementary schools. As a practical matter, the Triple-A concept offers the opportunity to extend this valuable program into the secondary school years. The nation cannot afford to leave any high school seniors behind.

This report outlines the need to raise our sights to prepare more students for

college and an increasingly complex world of work, to enroll more students in rigorous academic programs, to provide greater economic returns, and to ensure that our democracy continues to flourish. The Commission urges the nation to establish a more unified system of education, stretching from preschool to postsecondary education, in which students at each level will know exactly what must be done to advance to the next. In this system, standards, curriculum, and assessment efforts will be integrated with closer linkages between postsecondary education and K-12.

The Commission calls for more (and more rigorous) alternatives to traditional senior years that merely prolong "seat-time" by encouraging the development of capstone projects, the development of meaningful internships, and opportunities to take college-level courses. These efforts will raise educational achievements and aspirations so that all students have access to the rigorous academics currently offered only to the so-called "college-bound".

While a high school education was sufficient for the demands faced by earlier generations, children of the 21st century will need at least two years of postsecondary education, defined broadly to include adult education and training. The Commission's "Triple A Program" will help prepare students for these higher levels of education and greater challenges of the future.

We want to thank our colleagues on the Commission for their hard work. We are grateful for the efforts of our staff. Above all, we appreciate the contributions of the many people who took the time to share their views with us since January. We listened intently to their advice and always tried to do justice to what they had to tell us. Without their assistance, we could not have completed our work.

While a high school education was sufficient for the demands faced by earlier generations, children of the 21st century will need at least two years of postsecondary education

Hon. Paul E. Patton (Chairman)
Governor
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The Need to Raise Our Sights

It is time the nation raised its educational sights. That was the central message of the Commission's January report, *The Lost Opportunity of the Senior Year.* In that document, the Commission called for a brighter and more productive senior year for all American students. But before the nation could do that, the report said, it needed a better sense of where it stood.

The familiar world of the last 25 to 50 years no longer exists. The Cold War is over. The "melting pot" is boiling. The domestic economy has become global. Jobs lost at home turn up overseas. Industrial waste threatens local communities and acknowledges no national boundaries. Public health problems vault oceans and continents. The global village has truly come of age.

In this environment, American high-school graduates are expected to compete with their peers from abroad. And yesterday's luxury of an education beyond high school has become today's necessity. The standard to which we are called is demanding. It is nothing less than reshaping the inherited belief that 13 years of schooling from kindergarten through grade 12 provides an adequate preparation for today's students. In its place, we must put forth the more radical idea that Americans, whatever their background, must have 15 years of education and training over the course of their lives.

The picture the Commission presented in January was deeply troubling. Educational institutions, families, and communities are not meeting the educational needs of more than 50 percent of the students enrolled in public and private schools in the United States. National data support that bleak assessment. In 1997, only 43 percent of high school seniors reported themselves to be in demanding "academic" programs, compared with 45 percent in "general education" and 12 percent in vocational education programs.[1] Among 1998 graduates, according to the U.S. Department of Education, just 44 percent earned the minimum number of academic credits recommended in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in its seminal report, *A Nation at Risk.*[2]

Educational institutions, families, and communities are not meeting the educational needs of more than 50 percent of the students

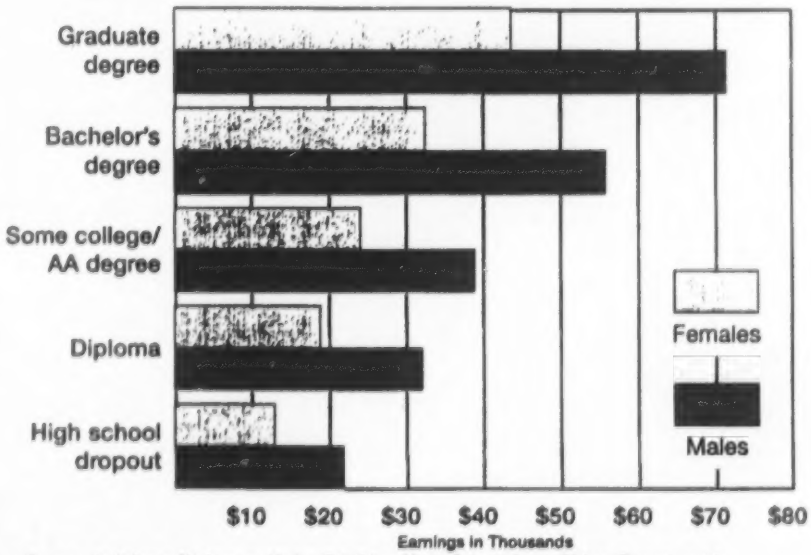
The Economic Returns of More Education

A college degree always has been a valuable asset. Everything else being equal, higher education correlates with higher income. In recent years, the returns for more education have become even more pronounced. Time and resources invested in education are returned to students many times over in the course of a lifetime.

One analysis indicates that, although women receive fewer benefits than men at every stage, both men and women earn more the higher up the educational ladder they climb. A male high school dropout makes only 39 percent of what a male with a college degree can expect to earn; even with a high school diploma, the male earns, on average, only 56 percent of what the college graduate makes. For women, the corresponding figures are 39 percent and 58 percent, respectively.

The More You Learn, The More You Earn

This figure reveals that as both men and women complete more education, both receive greater incomes; however, the economic returns to men consistently exceed those to women. A female high school dropout can expect to earn about $12,500 a year, while a female with a graduate degree can expect an annual income of nearly $44,000. The corresponding figures for men are about $21,900 and $72,000.



Source: *Building a Highway to Higher Ed.* (New York, Center for an Urban Future, n.d.)

About 53 million students were enrolled in the nation's schools in 1997 and 1998, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Based on these figures, nearly 30 million of them are being poorly served by their institutions and communities. This is true whether one accepts the students' report that just 43 percent are in "academic" programs or the federal estimate that only 44 percent have completed a rigorous high school program. Poorly prepared students are likely to flounder once they graduate. Unless our educational priorities change, these young people will struggle to get by on a series of dead-end, high-turnover jobs. They are being prepared for a future that already has vanished.

Yet the challenge of responding to this situation is even more daunting than the Commission's January report acknowledged. It now turns out that American primacy in higher education is a thing of the past. Degree and certificate completion in higher education and other postsecondary options has always been one of the great glories of the United States. Whatever the anxieties about its elementary and secondary schools, the nation always took pride in the fact that no other nation approached us in the proportion of adults graduating from college.[3] Yet in recent years, according to surveys from the 30-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), other countries have begun to catch up with the United States in higher education.[4] In these 30 nations, including most of Europe, North America, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, college enrollment has grown by 20 percent on average since 1995, with one in four young people now earning a postsecondary degree.[5]

Equally startling, according to OECD's most recent report, is that, for the first time, the United States' college-graduation rate is not the world's highest. Great Britain, Finland, the Netherlands, and New Zealand have surpassed the American college graduation rate[6], an accomplishment that even a few years ago would have struck many as inconceivable. Indeed, on average across OECD countries, a 17-year-old already can look forward to 2.5 years of "tertiary education" (leading to a bachelor's degree or the equivalent) — of which two years will be full-time study.[7] Resting on its educational laurels is a luxury the United States no longer can afford.

Goals for the American High School

The United States is undergoing economic, social, and demographic changes every bit as unsettling as any encountered by previous generations. The question facing us is how to prepare people for changes of this magnitude. The Commission does not hesitate to say that schools, education, scholarship, and learning always have been the preeminent public tools helping individuals connect with their communities and the larger culture. They must continue to serve that role in the future.

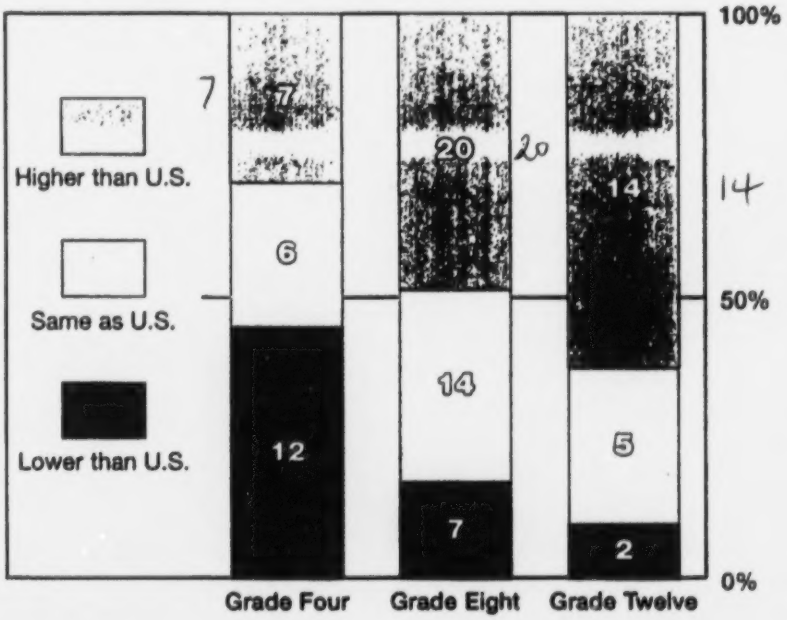
What do we want high schools to accomplish? This Commission unequivocally responds that the primary goal of high schools should be graduating students who are ready (and eager) to learn more, capable of thinking critically, and

Relative Performance Decline

Findings from a number of international assessments of student performance dating back to the 1970s reveal that the academic achievement of American secondary school students is not up to international standards. The most recent effort, the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) surveyed the mathematics and science achievement of students in more than 40 countries in grade 4, more than 30 in grade 8, and more than 20 in grade 12.

One analysis of the TIMSS data indicates that American students' performance relative to their foreign peers diminishes as they move through the elementary, middle, and secondary school years.

This figure reveals that 4th-grade students in seven nations performed higher than U.S. 4th-graders in mathematics; U.S. 4th-graders did just as well as 4th-graders from six other nations; and 4th-graders from 12 nations performed less well than U.S. 4th-graders in mathematics. Grade 8 and grade 12 columns can be read in the same way.



Source: *Youth at the Crossroads: Facing High School and Beyond.* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2000.) Paper presented to Commission by Kati Haycock, October 2000.

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comfortable with the ambiguities of the problem-solving process.

Education and learning are the 21st century's economic equivalent of oil, steam, and raw materials in the 19th and 20th. Yet it is also quite true that the purpose of schools, as Albert Einstein once argued, should not be the production of graduates who are simply "useful machines" in the economic sphere. Schools have a larger purpose — the development of fully formed human beings.

Our schools serve not simply economic ends, but social and democratic purposes as well. If our democracy is to continue to prosper, all Americans must possess the high levels of literacy, numeracy, logic, and the capacity to think critically that were once thought to be needed by only a select few.

All Americans will need to be comfortable with the scientific method, quantitative tools, and technology. All will need a knowledge of history (of both the United States and the world), an understanding of government and democratic values, and an appreciation for how the arts and literature enrich the human condition and expand its possibilities. And, because they will be asked to decide complicated public questions (often on the basis of incomplete and conflicting information), all citizens will need to be thoughtful observers of current events. In the workplace, everyone will need a mind equipped to think.

Standards-Based Reform

Guided by the work of national professional associations, states are setting new goals and higher standards for curricula. These efforts have been visible for a decade or more in English, mathematics, science, geography, languages, music and the arts, and other areas. The National Science Education Standards developed by the National Research Council are typical of these efforts. At the secondary level, the standards have the effect of requiring all students to take a minimum of three years of science and three of mathematics. Students interested in pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, or medicine will almost naturally take Advanced Placement electives in their fourth year of high school. For all students, the fourth year also provides the opportunity for applying science learning to such inherently interdisciplinary subjects as environmental science, computer arts, high-quality technology-based learning, and the like.

Everything that leads up to the final year helps contribute to its success (or failure) and everything that follows, either in education or work, should lead out of it

Goals for the Senior Year

Against that backdrop, we should be clear about the purposes of the senior year. Instead of functioning as a rest stop between the demands of elementary and secondary education and whatever follows, the final year should serve as a consummation of what already has been accomplished and a launching pad for what lies ahead.

As every parent, teacher, and administrator understands, the senior year does not stand in isolation. Everything that leads up to the final year helps contribute to its success (or failure) and everything that follows, either in education or work, should lead out of it. As such, the senior year should be the culmination of primary and secondary education, with clearly articulated high standards for leav-

ing school, *for which students should have been preparing for four or more years.*

The senior year also should be the embarkation point that launches the well-prepared student toward success in postsecondary education or the ever-more-complex workplaces of the new economy.[8] The high school senior year and graduation, therefore, become not so much a finish line as a relay station. Today, the handoff is fumbled and the baton too often dropped. Tomorrow, the senior year should be the place where one leg of the educational journey ends

High Schools That Work: Upgrade Academic Concentration

Fifteen years ago, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) set out to raise the achievement of the majority of high school students – those who go to work, enter the military, or attend an open-door two- or four-year college. Since then, the SREB's "High Schools That Work" (HSTW) initiative has grown from a handful of pilot sites to more than 1,100 high schools in 35 states, about 5 percent of all American high schools. These schools work toward a common goal of teaching an upgraded academic core and concentration that will prepare students for further learning and the workplace.

The HSTW-recommended curriculum consists of:

Language Arts Four credits in college-prep/honors courses in which students are required to read eight to 10 books a year, write and rewrite many short papers, and complete at least one major research paper annually.

Mathematics Three credits, including at least two in high-level courses such as Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II.

Science Three credits in lab courses, including at least two in high-level courses such as college-prep Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Anatomy/Physiology.

Concentration Four credits or their equivalent in an academic concentration in either mathematics/science or the humanities above the academic core or a concentration of career/technical studies. The broad career/technical field also focuses on developing students' ability to read and interpret the language of the field, apply mathematics to problems in the field, and understand technical concepts needed for continued learning. Students pursue the career/technical concentrations in their schools, regional technical schools, community colleges, and special work-based programs.

Senior Year SREB recommends that students spend half their time enrolled in higher-level academic courses, including mathematics or science.

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and the baton is passed as seamlessly and smoothly as possible so that young people enjoy a powerful boost into and through the leg that follows.

A feature of the 21st century high school should be an emphasis on connections between subjects — between math and science, between physics and modern biology, and between the sciences and history and society. If teachers are given the time for collegial professional development, high school seniors will know how to use their learning, how to connect key ideas within and among the disciplines, and even how to leaven the rigor and discipline of science with the wisdom and insights of the humanities.

The revolutionary reform of curricula encouraged by the standards movement can convert senioritis into a preparation for life in the 21st century. We already can see that this will be a new world of intensive technology, quantum progress in information science, and powerful scientific advances affecting everything from human life to the weather. These awe-inspiring changes are not something solely for scientists, engineers, and technicians. They are for all Americans, for every high school graduate faced with the joys and responsibilities of earning a living, raising a family, and making the day-to-day decisions required to play a part in community and national affairs.

Scheduling SREB recommends that schools consider some form of block scheduling to make it possible for students to earn 32 credits, rather than the traditional 24. A block schedule permits students to take four courses in math and science and in the concentration.

The Good News It works. Students completing the full program have average scores in math and science that reach the "proficiency" level on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)-based exams. They have average scores in reading that permit them to succeed in work and further learning. At experienced HSTW sites, 63 percent of students took math as seniors, and 52 percent took science.

Most students (85 percent) who participated in the assessment in these schools completed the recommended math curriculum, and 62 percent completed the science program. As larger percentages of students at HSTW schools enroll in higher-level courses, these forgotten students are beginning to look more and more like college-prep students.

The Need for a Preschool to Postsecondary Emphasis

Unfortunately, within the context of current school structures, it is hard to imagine reaching either these broad goals for the American high school or the more specific goals for the senior year. The challenge in part is a lack of shared vision about how to proceed; it also revolves around structural problems within the system itself. The reality is that this society has created at least three separate public systems of education in the

New Solutions to Enduring Problems

"Splendid isolation" may once have described accurately higher education's attitude toward public schools, but that is beginning to change.

o Nearly 20 states already have created K-16 or P-16 Councils to ramp up performance, improve teacher preparation, and strengthen relationships between schools and two- and four-year institutions.

o At public institutions as widespread as Arizona State University, Iowa State University, Ohio State University, Salish Kootenai College on Montana's Flathead Indian Reservation, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison, academic leaders have a history of active engagement in addressing the substantive challenges facing schools in their states and regions.

o From the establishment of the Holmes Group in the 1980s to the progress of the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education, academic officials have been working with school leaders on standards of excellence in teacher preparation.

o The National Science Foundation's PRIME Program brings science and engineering graduate students directly into K-12 classrooms.

o The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation has created a National Council on Education in the Disciplines to bring top scholars and schoolteachers together to work on how to introduce curricular substance in high school and college.

o The Teachers as Scholars Program, launched at Harvard University, has spread in two years to 25 campuses.

Sources: Kellogg Commission the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, *The Learning Connection* (Macroff, Callan, and Usdan, eds.), and communication from Robert Weisbuch, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, July 12, 2001.

United States.

The first system was developed at the turn of the last century by a group known as the Committee of Ten. It was quite explicitly directed at outlining a course of study to prepare young people for college work. This "college-preparatory" system educates 5-to-18-year-olds and professes to prepare them for postsecondary education. On its very face, this system is not doing enough. While nearly three-quarters of all graduates will enroll in a postsecondary program immediately, the K-12 system continues to behave as though preparing about 43 percent of graduates for postsecondary work is adequate.

The second system was established for the non-college-bound. Developed during a period when fewer than half of all 18-year-olds graduated from high school, and perhaps 10 percent of all graduates went to college, this second public system aims to prepare graduates for work. Initially called a "vocational" program, through a process of mitosis it has split and split again.

First, a "general" education program was created. Later, several different variations of both "vocational" and "general" education were added. A recent commentary on curricular splintering completed by a major urban newspaper confirmed the daily experience of teachers and parents. It identified a bewildering smorgasbord of academic work. Courses masquerading under the same name range from "special education" to "modified" to "mid-level" and "academic," to "college-preparatory" and "honors" tracks.[9] On a transcript, a course identified as Algebra I may cover basic mathematics and addition for students in one class, while addressing exponents and equations for students in another. Tenth-grade English classes may address writing and complex short stories under one teacher, while down the hall a course with the same title worries about verbs, punctuation, and parts of speech. For the purposes of our analysis, all of the non-college bound tracks are counted as one of the three systems.

The third public system was designed to offer higher education, universally and at low prices, to every high school graduate. Until recently, this system maintained itself in splendid isolation from its elementary and secondary school brethren. Although this system is responsible for preparing the teachers employed in the first two, it has bridled at suggestions that it should be accountable for teacher quality. While espousing platitudes about quality and standards, it showed little interest in monitoring the teaching quality of its own faculty or ensuring the quality of the teachers it prepared. Fortunately, these attitudes are beginning to change.

In the modern world, all three systems must draw closer together, coming to view themselves as part of a common endeavor

In the modern world, all three systems must draw closer together and view themselves as part of a common endeavor.

In this report, the Commission addresses many of the challenges that diminish the value of high school in general and the senior year in particular. These challenges force too many college students and entry-level workers into remedial programs. The report also provides a strategic approach to encourage K-12 and higher education to become truly one system, a common endeavor focused on helping students reach high standards every step of the way. The Commission's work therefore merges the

standards-based school reform movement, which has become the focus of efforts in practically every state, with emerging new efforts to create a P-16 system of education – from pre-school through postsecondary education.[10] The "P-16" movement is an important next step not only in school improvement and improved coordination of state education systems, but also in the effort to improve the performance of postsecondary education.

The P-16 movement is an important next step

In a standards-based system that links postsecondary education with public schools, students will begin school at the age of five or six ready to learn. Those students who are not will be identified early and provided with the targeted support and help they need to gain the reading and mathematics skills required to succeed in school later.

President Bush's "Leave No Child Behind" program can help guarantee that no student will be warehoused during his or her years in elementary education. The elementary school will ensure that all students have the reading and mathematics skills needed to succeed and deal with the rich content and skills presented at the secondary level. Similarly, the broader standards-based reform movement, supplemented by the assessment provisions of "Leave No Child Behind" will ensure that students are not tracked into a curriculum that guarantees academic failure and dead-end employment.

No High School Senior Left Behind

If this Commission's recommendations are accepted, the new contribution will be to ensure that no high school senior is left behind. A high school diploma should again become a mark of accomplishment, not simply recognition of seat time accumulated. High school graduation will gain new meaning. Graduates will now meet the skills and standards expected by employers in the new economy and by admissions officials and academic deans in institutions of postsecondary education. All students who begin work, start an apprenticeship, or enter college or proprietary school will be equipped to succeed from the very first day.

Students who do not reach the senior year already have been left behind. Special efforts will be required to reach them early and keep them in school. Early in their high school experience, certainly by the 10th grade, schools should provide opportunities for ill prepared students to catch up. Those students performing below grade level require additional support services such as double dosing, tutoring, and accelerated courses.

In the environment the Commission has described, dropping out of school is a prescription for trouble. It is unacceptable that nearly 29 percent of Hispanic youth aged 16 to 24 have dropped out of school, or even that the rates for African-American and white students are 12.6 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively.[11] Our society must do better.

Four generations ago, an 8th-grade education would equip most Americans for the life ahead of them. As recently as 25 years ago, a high school diploma was enough. Today, and into the foreseeable future, practically all Americans will require two years or more of postsecondary education and training. An edu-

cation beyond high school, once considered a luxury by many Americans as recently as 25 years ago, has become today's necessity. In the age of agriculture, postsecondary education was a pipe dream for most Americans. In the industrial age it was the birthright of only a few. By the space age, it became common for many. Today, it is common sense for all.

Recommendations: The Triple-A Program

The data available to the Commission point to high schools challenged by the number of demands made on them, troubled by conflicting signals, trapped in their own view of themselves, and conscious that somehow they are not performing as well as they should.

In the face of these challenges, a great deal of progress has been made in recent decades in our commitment to advance learning, improve teaching, raise expectations, and put education at the top of the nation's policy agenda. This progress has included a new commitment to standards, greater awareness of the need to align educational programs throughout K-12, and more support for new forms of assessment and improved accountability. Unfortunately these advances have occurred in a piecemeal fashion, their impact sometimes diminished by the lack of a larger vision embracing and sustaining more coherent change.

Powerful pressures are at work throughout education to preserve the *status quo*. These include: the failure of elected officials to invest more in early childhood education and K-12 teachers, community resistance to new and more demanding standards, ambivalence from teachers and administrators about new forms of assessment, internecine squabbling among administrators and school board members, and a higher education enterprise that until recently managed to behave as though it bore no responsibility for the schools for which it prepared teachers and administrators.

Faced with these forces, the very fragmentation of the reform movement itself stands as an obstacle to progress. The proliferation of reform initiatives at the state and federal levels makes meaningful change difficult. And the hodgepodge of panels, commissions, task forces, study groups, and blue-ribbon oversight committees, each tending hither and yon, is hard to keep in focus.

A great deal of difficult work still lies ahead. No single "silver bullet" will bring about the changes required in the nation's education system. Nor can the United States succeed if it simply tinkers with a policy here and changes a practice

The United States cannot succeed if it simply tinkers with a policy here and changes a practice there

there. What is required is a nationwide commitment by states and communities to provide all students with rigorous and challenging academic preparation. What is required is the building of new bridges between K-12 and postsecondary education, bridges that are broad, substantial, and frequently used, with traffic running both ways. In the final analysis, what is really needed is profound change in the expectations of what business as usual should look like, both in American schools and in institutions of postsecondary education.

Many states already have begun the work required. Of 24 states attempting to create a "seamless system of education," 18 have begun to think of this work as an effort to create a "P-16" system – that is, a system of education extending from preschool through four years after high school graduation.

In this "P-16" work, an important truth has become apparent. The first is that it is not only the path through high school that is important for the nation's young people, it is the rigor of that path as well. The bar needs to be raised for all the institutions responsible for student performance (and the adults responsible for them) at least as much as it needs to be raised for the students themselves.

All students should experience a rigorous curriculum, presented by qualified teachers. *All students* deserve to be tested on their competence using a variety of assessment measures. *All students* are entitled to know that they are progressing through the grades on the basis of their competence and not because of their age or size. *All students* are entitled to know that high-stakes decisions will not hinge on a single measure. And *all students* should be assured they will receive the support they need to master the material presented.

The Commission calls for a new vision of education that will extend the standard number of years of education from 13 to 15. The goal is to ensure that all young people gain the skills needed for the greater demands of the 21st century.

The Commission also calls for the development of a new social compact around the American secondary school. Convened perhaps by the U.S. Secretary of Education or a state consortium, it should be a grand alliance of all those whose interests converge around the 12th grade – parents, students, school leaders, institutions of postsecondary education, employers (public and private) and the military. The task of this alliance should be to advance what the Commission thinks of as the "Triple-A Program" designed to (1) improve **alignment**, (2) raise **achievement** and (3) provide more (and more rigorous) **alternatives**.

Improve Alignment: The nation needs to take the next step in its long-term educational evolution. It is time to move beyond separate systems, in which curriculum and assessment systems in K-12 and postsecondary education bear little relationship to each other, to a more seamless system in which standards, curriculum, and assessment efforts between the two systems are aligned and integrated. In truth, what is required is a new commitment to a single system of "P-16" education, in which the sights of everyone at every level of the system are raised to take into account new requirements, challenges, and expectations.

P-16: Making it Happen

In an effort to integrate teaching and learning across the years, about 18 states already have created K-16 or P-16 Councils. Some are voluntary (Maryland); some are legislated (Georgia); and most (Oregon) worry about the transition from high school to college.

Maryland ***A voluntary effort launched by the heads of three separate statewide systems.***
Maryland's Partnership for Teaching and Learning, K-16, an effort to bridge the gap between precollegiate study and higher education, aims to raise standards and improve teaching up and down the line. The architects – the state university chancellor, the state school superintendent, and the state higher education secretary – began in 1995 to try to put turf protection aside in an effort to advance educational opportunity. Their goals are to raise academic standards, reform teacher education, and guarantee equal educational opportunity in all Maryland schools.

Georgia ***Raising Standards through school-college collaboration.***
Georgia has one of the most ambitious "P-16" efforts in the country, one driven by anxiety about student preparation and equal opportunity. Since 1995, Georgia's "P-16" initiative has focused on three strategies: (1) aligning expectations, standards, curriculum, and assessment for students from preschool through postsecondary education; (2) providing a qualified teacher in every public school classroom; and (3) providing enrichment programs for 7^{th} through 12^{th} grade for students at-risk of not achieving their potential.

Oregon ***Trying to align proficiency exams with university admissions.***
If all goes according to plan, by 2005 Oregon's seven public universities and 17 community colleges will begin using a Proficiency-based Admissions Standards System (PASS) rather than course credits and grade-point averages to judge students for admission. It's still a high-risk effort, one launched in 1993 by the governor and the state boards of education and higher education. Although some remain unconvinced, many former skeptics in the academic world have become staunch advocates of the movement.

Source: *The Learning Connection: New Partnerships between Schools and Colleges*, Gene I. Maeroff, Patrick M. Callan, and Michael D. Usdan, eds. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001.

Raise Achievement: Across the board, the nation needs to raise the bar of educational achievement and aspirations. A system that rations demanding college-preparatory programs so that they serve only a few needs to raise its sights to make a "college-preparatory-like" curriculum the default curriculum for all students. Every student should be entitled to the high-quality coursework required for success on the job or in postsecondary education. Accomplishing this endeavor, of course, will require that students, parents, and educators lift their aspirations and recognize the importance of preparing for demanding academic work and training beyond high school. Raising the bar for students will require investments in teaching in the form of professional development, reductions in class size, and higher salaries.

Provide More (and More Rigorous) Alternatives: The Commission calls for moving away from a system in which the senior year is just more of the same to one in which the senior year provides time to explore options and prove knowledge and skills. Ideally, every senior should complete a capstone project, perform an internship, complete a research project, participate in community service, or take college-level courses. This change, like the others, will be extraordinarily demanding, requiring educators and policymakers to raise their sights beyond the traditional and the familiar and toward new alternatives for soon-to-be graduates.

The Commission wants to stress that, in calling for all high school students to experience a demanding curriculum it is not calling for neglect of those who do not plan to enroll immediately in postsecondary education. Far from it. Since nearly three-quarters of all high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education within a year or two of graduation, the Commission's recommendation simply calls for conforming school practice to educational reality. The Commission also is restating a long-held view of countless educators, business leaders, and policymakers who are convinced that the best preparation in high school readies students for postsecondary education, work, and life.[12]

A more demanding secondary school curriculum will enable these students to enter the workforce immediately, if they choose to, confident that they have the skills and knowledge needed on the job and, increasingly, in their employer's classrooms. They also will be better equipped to attend college later or enroll in specialized training as their careers develop. It perhaps needs also to be added that as more students receive the preparation they need to continue education right out of high school, the more likely they are to enroll immediately in college or other postsecondary courses.

Improve Alignment

The Challenge: Lack of alignment between the curriculum, standards, and assessment systems of K-12 and postsecondary education means that students find themselves poorly prepared for postsecondary education and work. Communication gaps between the systems contribute to inadequately prepared teachers and to unacceptably large numbers of college dropouts.

One of the great success stories of the United States is the achievement of providing postsecondary access to more than 70 percent of today's high school graduates. Until recently, this accomplishment was without international parallel and it stands as a tribute to both the K-12 and postsecondary education systems in the United States.

Unfortunately, many of these students are not being provided with access to success. Inadequate academic preparation is a major reason why only about half of those who enroll on a four-year campus receive a degree within six years; even larger proportions of enrollees at community colleges leave without a diploma or a certificate. Sadly, the success rate of disadvantaged students is well below that of their white peers, reflecting systemic barriers to their success that extend into the K-12 and the postsecondary universes.[13]

The standards and assessment landscape facing high school seniors is full of enough confusing twists, turns, and cul-de-sacs to leave many students lost and stranded. Students may, in fact, run the gauntlet of four different sets of requirements governing high school graduation, college admission, obtaining a job, or obtaining permission to enroll in credit-bearing courses once on campus.[14] Even if students must pass a competency examination to obtain a high school diploma, most of these examinations cover content drawn from the 9th- or 10th-grade curriculum. It seems that only 10 states have aligned their high school graduation and college admissions requirements in English — and only two have aligned them in mathematics.[15] Many students also mistakenly assume that two- and four-year college open admissions policies, rather than placement examinations, determine whether students can do college-level work.

In light of this confusion, it is hardly surprising that about one-third of students arrive at postsecondary educational institutions unprepared for college-level work, many requiring remedial courses on campus. And it helps explain why more than one-quarter of four-year-college freshmen and close to half of those in community colleges do not return for a second year.

The simple truth is that K-12 systems cannot align their curricula and standards with postsecondary education and work unless both of these systems are much clearer about the core reading, writing, and mathematics skills students need to succeed. Corporations and institutions of postsecondary education must become active partners in the alignment effort.

Only 10 states have aligned their high school graduation and college admissions requirements in English, only two in mathematics

Lack of communication between K-12 education and postsecondary institutions also contributes to the inadequate supply of qualified teachers. As K-12 systems move toward higher standards for their students, they find that teachers are not prepared to teach the more difficult content. Many teacher education programs either are not familiar with the new standards or have not done enough to prepare their students to teach to them.

Recommendation

Every state should create a P-16 Council and charge it with increasing student access to (and success in) postsecondary education. These councils should be charged with creating significant and systematic linkages between preschool, elementary, second-

ary, and postsecondary education, linkages that should include aligning standards for high school graduation, college admission, and enrollment in credit-bearing courses. A special focus of these efforts should be increasing the college attendance and completion rate of low-income, disadvantaged, and minority students.

o These councils should include teachers and administrators from elementary, middle, and secondary schools, along with representatives from preschool programs and postsecondary education. Ideally, they also would include legislators, executive branch officials, parents, and business and labor leaders.

o The work of these statewide P-16 councils should address the full range of

Testing's Tower of Babel

It's to be expected that some differences will exist between testing and assessment efforts among different levels of education. To some extent, each is entitled to speak its own language. But the degree to which K-12 and higher education testing and assessment differ threatens to create a new Tower of Babel, according to experts who have examined the issue.

The Standards Movement and the K-16 Disjuncture

Standards-based reform has overlooked the incoherence in content and assessment systems in K-12 and higher education.

"Colleges and universities rely on the SAT I and ACT to provide some national assessment uniformity, but neither of these tests is well aligned with many recent reforms in K-12 standards. The relationship between K-12 standards and college placement tests is even more chaotic. In 1995, for example, universities in the southeastern United States devised 125 combinations of 75 different placement tests, with scant regard for secondary school standards.

"Tests at each level — K-12 achievement tests, standardized college entrance exams, and college placement assessments — use different formats, emphasize different content, and are given under different conditions, for example:

o High school assessments in Pennsylvania and Florida rely heavily on open-ended written work, but the SAT I, ACT, and some Florida college placement exams use multiple-choice tests to assess students' writing skills. Massachusetts' K-12 assessment also contains performance items that are dissimilar to the closed-end multiple-choice format of the SAT and ACT.

o California's new standards test includes math that is more advanced and difficult than the SAT and ACT, but Texas's high school assessment (TAAS) includes less algebra and geometry than the SAT.

issues discussed in this report. In particular, they should take up the fact that school curricula are not aligned with exit examinations.

o Under the leadership of the P-16 council, groups representing school administrators and secondary school principals, on the one hand, and university admissions and academic officials, on the other, should collaborate in a critical review of high school and collegiate curricula. Paying particular attention to the linkages between the last two years of high school and the first two years of postsecondary work, these groups should examine how to improve alignment of academic content, admissions procedures, and student-performance expectations.

o The councils also should oversee the development or verification of standards for teacher knowledge and performance – standards that reflect K-12 content and performance requirements for students. All graduates of teacher education programs within the state should be required to meet these standards.

o The councils also should examine critical teacher "pipeline" issues, such as recruitment, training, retention, compensation, and training and professional development. No ambitious plan to reform schools can succeed while ignoring the need to improve teaching and to address the needs of teachers.

Although this Commission feels strongly about what needs to be done, it understands it possesses no authority to implement these recommendations. Because the Commission's recommendations are not self-implementing, it has suggested that states create a mechanism, in the form of P-16 Councils, to implement these important changes. It is our hope that the research and recommendations of these councils will be forwarded to appropriate legislative and state officials for review and implementation.

o Some state K-12 assessments permit students to use calculators, but many college placement exams do not.

o Texas has a statewide postsecondary placement test (TASP), but many Texas universities also use their own placement exams. Many high school students in Texas either are confused by or unaware of college placement standards.

"In addition, many state assessments do not go beyond 10th grade and do not test every pupil (they use a matrix sample); such scores cannot be used for college admissions or placement. By contrast, Illinois is implementing a new state test to be given in grades 11 and 12 and plans to combine a state standards-based assessment with ACT."

Source: Michael W. Kirst, *Overcoming the High School Slump: New Education Policies* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, May 2001). Originally prepared for the Commission and presented in September 2000.

The New Shape of Postsecondary Education

College once may have been an idyllic world of young, unmarried students right out of high school fitting in a few classes between pledge week and fraternity or sorority rush, but those days are past. Today's students are older, more demanding, and frequently part time; and the institutions serving them are almost as likely to be in a shopping center or corporate training facility as on a bucolic campus.

- Fewer than one-fifth of today's college students meet the stereotype of an 18-to-22-year-old living on campus and attending college full time.

- Women, working adults, part-timers, and students drove the enrollment bulge of the 1980s and 1990s over the age of 25.

- Today's new breed of student is interested in four dimensions of postsecondary education: convenience, service, quality, and low cost.

- The students want a stripped-down version of higher education, minus the plethora of electives and student activities.

- There are some 3,600 institutions of higher education in the United States, enrolling about 15 million students.

- About one-third of those institutions are community colleges enrolling about one-half of all students and experiencing double the growth rate in student enrollment of four-year institutions.

- One of the fastest growing degree-granting institutions in the United States in the last 20 years is University of Phoenix, a for-profit institution offering a limited number of majors, few electives, and instruction by part-time faculty during the evenings and weekends.

- More than 1,000 "corporate universities" already exist, providing instruction and training for their own workers in everything from food preparation to high-end electronics assembly.

Sources: Arthur Levine, "Privatization in Higher Education," *Higher Expectations: Essays on the Future of Postsecondary Education*, National Governors Association, 2001, and *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1997. Bob Davis and David Uessel "Prosperity – The Coming 20-Year Boom and What it Means to You."

Raise Achievement

The Challenge: Recognizing that in the world they are entering, all students will need more than a high school education, levels of achievement for all American high school students must be improved dramatically to prepare them for the demands of life, work, and further learning.

The soaring American economy of the past decade and the prosperity accompanying it often have masked the consequences of the fact that our schools still sort young people into those we expect to go to college and the "rest." Yet, the increasing importance of intellectual capital in today's knowledge economy requires that the American high school be transformed from an institution that prepares a few for further learning into one that prepares all students for living and prospering in an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

Postsecondary Education for All: The New Common Sense

In this new environment, the high school diploma must become a genuine passport to further learning and work, not simply a certification of time spent in class. High school itself no longer can be viewed as the culmination of anyone's education. To continue to grant high school diplomas to students who have not completed a rigorous and demanding program of studies is to foreclose their opportunities and consign them to a lifetime of low-paying drudgework.

Recent research indicates that high school graduates who follow a "college preparatory" program are more likely to enroll in and complete college than students who complete a "regular" high school diploma program. The Commission points this out not because there is anything novel about this finding, but because high schools (and parents and students) continue to act as though making it through a watered-down high school curriculum amounts to the same thing as completing a more demanding sequence of courses.

Finally, we want to emphasize that low expectations devastate the life chances of many low-income and disadvantaged students. What President Bush has called the "soft bigotry of low expectations" cannot be tolerated in the emerging world. Low expectations lead to students who receive algebra without equations, science without laboratories, and literature without reading. They lead also to an education system that produces African American and Latino 17-year-olds who read at the same level as white 13-year-olds.[16] These conditions and results no longer can be excused or tolerated.

The Need to Raise Awareness

At every stage of the educational process, student and parental aspirations for further learning are rarely matched by awareness of the effort required to get there. People's reach should exceed their grasp, but students should not be allowed to fool themselves. Recent studies of 9th-graders and their families, for example, indicate that although more than 90 percent expect to complete some postsecondary education, few know what it means to graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college. Indeed, such knowledge appears to be limited to

students whose parents graduated from college.

Family resources and knowledge produce the plan and support required for completion of the demanding coursework in the middle and high school years that lead to success in college. This fact points to the extent to which low-income and minority students are, of necessity, forced to rely on school resources. If these students do not receive advance warning and guidance within the schools, there are few adults in their homes (nor, perhaps, in their communities) who can offer advice.

Recent surveys also indicate that the nation's teaching corps does not always believe that all students need the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the traditionally college bound.[17] The research the Commission has examined indicates that about half of all teachers do not consider such goals as helping students achieve their plans or preparing students both for employment and further learning to be "very important." Only 38 percent consider helping all students prepare for college to be very important.[18]

The nation's feelings about the appropriate role of secondary schools and the place of the senior year in the high school experience are deeply ingrained in the American culture. Too many parents and citizens accept the traditional function of the high school as the Great American Sorting Machine. "The high school I attended was good enough for me, and it should be good enough for today's kids," appears to be a common perception.

Part of what is required to change this perception involves educating parents and students about why adequate preparation in the middle school years is essential to success in high school. Another part involves improving students' understanding of the intellectual demands postsecondary schooling and modern work will make on them. Yet a third involves exploring educational options and careers as early as the middle school years

With regard to the senior year, teachers, parents, and students across the nation agree that the most common term used to characterize the senior year is "senioritis." The term suggests that somehow young people are afflicted with a short-term disease, one as predictable as the flu season that incapacitates young people in terms of academic growth. In this final year, time itself stands still, as the serious work expected in the junior year and in postsecondary education is put on hold. In communities across the country, parents argue that their children need to "take some time off," "relax before they enter adulthood," or "enjoy the end of adolescence." There is little sense of the final year as a time to strengthen skills, enhance preparation for postsecondary programs, broaden experiences to include service or demanding work-based learning, or culminate earlier classroom experience in a senior project. In fairness to students and their parents, many high school faculty and administrators share these attitudes.

Recommendation

States should require school districts to obtain parental permission before assigning high school students to a level below "college-preparatory" courses, which should be the default curriculum for all students.

o Because a "college-preparatory-like" curriculum will become the default curriculum, elementary and middle schools should re-examine their curricula to make sure that all students are well prepared for demanding work at the next level.

o In every state, use existing knowledge to create district-level pilot sites where all students are prepared for, and take, rigorous courses in the middle and high school years. Evaluate and conduct research on the factors leading to success in those sites.

o At the local level, create task forces to examine short-term opportunities for providing larger numbers of students with a demanding and rigorous curriculum.

o At the state and federal levels, eliminate all programs that have the explicit or unintended consequence of categorizing students into groups so that offering them a watered-down curriculum can be more readily justified. Plans should be developed to redirect program funds toward support systems aimed at helping students meet higher academic standards.

Recommendation

P-16 Councils should pay particular attention to increasing awareness of students, parents, and the general public about the need for education beyond high school and the importance of reshaping the high school from an institution that sorts students into one that helps all of them succeed.

o Beginning in the middle school years, probably in grade 6, teachers, administrators, counselors, and students and parents should begin work on a formal "learning plan" for every student. This plan, updated annually, should be a flexible, moving target — an outline of what the student hopes to accomplish as a young adult, accompanied by recommendations of the ideal education, work, and service experiences to help him or her attain those goals.

Teacher preparation and school district professional development programs should educate all teachers, particularly those teaching in the middle and high school years, in the lifelong education and training needs of today's students.

o Universities and academic consortia should publicize their explicit standards for first-year undergraduate performance as well as standards for senior-year performance, both for students granted early admission and students admitted later in their senior year.

o Districts and states should cooperate to develop "early warning" systems and "reality checks" to identify both middle school and senior high school students at risk of being poorly prepared for the next leg of their educational journey.

o To help students and their parents gauge their readiness to move on, mock entrance examinations for corporate and union training programs, as well as for college placement, should be offered on high school campuses (perhaps as early as the 10th grade).

In pursuit of the recommendations, educators must pay particular attention to the gifted, the disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. The public has spoken clearly on the need to educate all children; states need to use funds available under the "Leave No Child Behind" program in this effort. They should help school districts develop systems that continually diagnose the learning needs of all students (from kindergarten on) and, where necessary, provide additional support to those at risk of not succeeding in demanding courses in the middle and high school years.

Provide More (and More Rigorous) Alternatives

The Challenge: Educators and policymakers need to develop the will and fortitude to rethink the last year of high school and provide demanding options leading to a seamless transition to further education or work.

More (and More Demanding) Options

Across the nation, many experiments already are pointing the way toward demanding alternatives that relieve the tedium characterizing much of high school work.

LaGuardia's Middle College High School

A high school on a college campus

Since 1971, the City University of New York's LaGuardia Community College has been incubating educational change. It pioneered the concept of a "middle college high school," a high school on a college campus designed to focus on high school students with the potential for accomplishing college work who were on the verge of dropping out of school. From the lone example of LaGuardia in 1971, the concept now involves some 25 campuses around the country. Whether in New York City, Flint, Michigan, or Memphis, Tennessee, the emphasis is always the same – capture students at risk of failure, often minority and economically disadvantaged, and turn them on to the excitement of learning. Different programs adopt different targets. LaGuardia addresses the needs of students new to the United States. In Las Vegas, a similar effort reaches out to high school sophomores in trouble.

Angola High School

A comprehensive high school with business partnerships

Angola High School in Angola, Indiana, has developed a flexible, four-block, intensive schedule that allows business and academic partnerships, accelerated student curriculum, and extra time in courses for those who need it. The school's flexible schedule allows students to spend up to two hours daily in a learning environment at local industries. These nine-week experiences connect curriculum to the workplace. This New American High School has shown signifi-

American schools are properly receiving credit for their efforts to implement standards-based reform. Although these efforts are sometimes hard to see from outside the system, inside the nation's schools much is changing. Because these standards now are being put in place, they provide the chance to move away from seat time to student competence as a measure of readiness to progress.

Despite these changes, the Commission's discussions with recent graduates show that many students find the final two years of high school boring and tiresome. One distinguished academic leader, the president of Bard College, has gone so far as to recommend abolishing the final two years of high school.[19] He does so partially on the grounds that students are maturing physically much earlier than they used to, and that high schools, designed to deal with "large children" are incapable of dealing with the young adults they now enroll. Outside the school, teenagers often are treated as adults; inside it, that is almost never true.

In recommending a more rigorous and demanding program of studies for all students, this Commission has no interest in creating a rigid lock-step system. On the contrary, to the extent possible, young people should be encouraged to finish high school at their own pace. Some students may be able to graduate in three years; some may require five. As they meet the standards, they should be encouraged to move on if they feel ready. The Commission also believes there is a great deal to be said for creating multiple new structures for the last two years of high school, developing demanding mechanisms to help students prepare for further learning or for work.

Educators should work to provide the widest possible array of demanding educational alternatives for all students, depending on their progress and their interests. Some will want to marry coursework with community service. They should be encouraged to do so. Others can find employment and internships off campus related to their academic work. Such opportunities are much more likely to be beneficial than the mindlessness of the part-time, unskilled work that employs too many teenagers

cant achievement improvement over six years and has been cited as an exemplary program by the University of Minnesota.

Simon's Rock College

A four-year college for young scholars

Simon's Rock of Bard College is the nation's only four-year liberal arts college for younger scholars. Founded on the idea that many bright, highly motivated young people of 15 or 16 are ready for serious college work, the college was designed to tackle the tedium and repetitiveness involved in the transition from the last two years of high school to the first two years of college. Launched in the Massachusetts' Berkshire area in 1964 as a woman's college offering an associate's degree, it now offers a full four-year program for men and women.

Sources: *The Learning Connection: New Partnerships between Schools and Colleges*, Gene I. Maeroff, Patrick M. Callan, and Michael D. Usdan, eds. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001.) *Building a Highway to Higher Ed.* (New York: Center for an Urban Future, nd.)

just looking for a paycheck.

Students who already have completed an Advanced Placement course may find a promising opportunity to enroll for credit in a college course nearby. By all means, schools should make that easy for them. We believe that middle college and dual enrollment options with local colleges and technical institutes should be encouraged.

Whatever the option selected, it should contribute to the student's transition out of high school and into further education or a job. The point is that these alternatives can genuinely help students develop a sense of purpose about their lives. Challenging alternatives such as rigorous senior year projects can help connect students to their futures as citizens, employees and employers, and lifelong learners.

One of the paradoxes with which the Commission struggled is that K-12 and postsecondary education institutions frequently find themselves doing each other's job. Two- and four-year colleges offer basic secondary school work in reading, writing, and mathematics as remedial classes, while high schools offer coursework for credit in the form of Advanced Placement. In effect, the Commission believes it is time to accommodate institutional theory to institutional reality. If students are ready for postsecondary work by the age of 16 or 17, they should be encouraged to pursue it. The point is that once the system begins to take seriously the possibility that all students are entitled to diverse options in the last years of high school, there is almost no limit to the valuable and worthwhile ways that possibility can be pursued.

Recommendation

State and local educators should reshape the senior year to provide more learning opportunities of all kinds. They should develop sound alternative paths (Advanced Placement, dual enrollment in secondary schools and postsecondary institutions, rigorous structured work experiences, and community service) to provide credit toward graduation for high school students and ease their transition from high school to postsecondary education and the world of work. They should:

o Greatly expand the opportunity for high school students to experience the challenges of college-level work and increase the number of "middle college" options for older students in the last two years of high school.[20] Increasing opportunities for dual enrollment (and early high school exit for college enrollment) will permit students to meet admission requirements in the junior or the senior year. Providing more opportunities for Advanced Placement programs, using the Internet and distance-learning techniques if need be, while seeking out low-income and disadvantaged students for enrollment in these courses, will help more students meet higher standards.

o Provide options for service- and work-based learning opportunities for credit. High-quality career programs that integrate academic standards with challenging technical content serve many students well. Service opportunities tied to a demanding curriculum can expand

greatly students' awareness of the world into which they will graduate. And high-quality apprenticeships and opportunities for interning (related once again to course content) can remind students of the relationship between their studies and their future after graduation.

o Experiment with efforts to create "virtual high schools" that employ distance-learning techniques to provide the highest quality instruction and programming, particularly in low-income or isolated rural communities experiencing difficulty attracting well-qualified teachers.

o Require all seniors to showcase an accumulated portfolio of their work throughout high school, including a senior project demonstrating their capabilities for research, creative thinking, rigorous analysis, and clear written and oral communication.

o Investigate alternative ways to use and schedule time, including block schedules, to provide the flexibility needed to explore complex subjects in depth and complete rigorous projects.

Recommendation

In advancing this work, particularly at the middle and secondary levels, consciously aim to provide all students with strong connections to adults (in and out of school) who can help them explore options for school, post-secondary education, and work.

Recent research points to the fact that most teenagers value adult relationships and consider their parents to be their most important influence. Parents, guardians, and other role models need to be there for young people, both in and out of school. They can be mentors, guides, and counselors as youths navigate the difficult years of adolescence.

Parents, guardians, and other members of the extended family are clearly the first source of mentors for most children. In cases when they are not available or cannot function as role models, other advocates can be mentors. Business groups, civic associations, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the faith community, and older Americans all can make substantial contributions. They can help provide advocates for young people by offering volunteer services and assistance with mentoring in schools across the nation.

Although schools have tried to professionalize much of this mentoring function by assigning it to counseling offices, these offices are frequently understaffed. Data examined by the Commission indicate that the average middle- and high-school counselor is responsible for 500 students. In Arizona, each counselor is responsible for 736 students. In California, counselors find themselves confronting 994 students; in Illinois, 700; in Minnesota, 800; and in Utah the figure is 730.[21] Overworked and over-burdened, counselors cannot do an adequate job for most of these students.

o State and local education agencies should provide the resources needed to realign the roles and reduce the caseloads of school counselors. Counselors will need time to oversee the development of the "learning plans" outlined earlier and to act as mentors to individual students with the greatest need for guidance.

o State education agencies should work with local education agencies and leaders in the philanthropic community to emphasize the need for an adult advocate for every child in every school. This effort deserves the same intensity of state support as standards-based reform has received.

o Local community-based organizations of all kinds, including civic associations, the faith-based community, and community improvement groups should actively seek out opportunities to mentor students through the middle and high school years.

The common educational task before us is to take the Triple-A Program and use it to realize a new vision of 15 years of education and training for all

o Local associations of employers also should be advocates, encouraging their employer-members to find ways to free up employees' time to work as mentors in local schools.

A Final Word

America's strength has always rested on its faith in education. Although the nation's commitment to equal educational opportunity has been uneven, this Commission is confident the battle can be won. Generations of Americans have laid down the markers defining American progress through education. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 opened up the American Midwest by setting aside land for the public purpose of schooling. As early as the 19th century, Horace Mann and other philosophers held out the promise of the benefits of universal education. President Lincoln signed into law the Morrill Act of 1862, providing for land-grant institutions, "the people's universities," in every state. In the last half of the 20th century, every American president put his faith behind the promise of more and more schooling for more and more Americans. Education is not a partisan issue. Transcending political differences, the nation's schools and colleges have always enjoyed support across the political spectrum.

Now this generation is called on to do its part. Success in the ongoing struggle will require new energy from us all. In pursuit of the common sense that an education beyond high school is now a necessity, not a luxury, it is time to raise our sights: All Americans deserve the opportunity to pursue their education at least two years beyond the senior year of high school.

The task of this Commission is to lay that concept in front of policymakers. Turning that policy into reality undoubtedly will require new legislation, additional funding, novel partnerships, and new thinking. But policymakers cannot succeed alone. If this new education venture is to be crowned with the success of earlier efforts, public officials will need the support of the American people. Those of us enjoying the blessings of freedom also bear its burdens. All of us share a responsibility to work together to create a common future. The common educational task before us today is to take the "Triple-A Program" and use it to realize a new vision of 15 years of education and training for all.

By raising our sights, this generation of Americans will leave behind an education legacy rivaling any inherited in our past. We have it within our grasp to make sure that no high school student is left behind. The National Commission on the High School Senior Year offers this report in support of that great effort.

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Appendix A

Acknowledgments

The Commission is grateful for the contributions of many individuals and organizations whose assistance made this report possible.

Our first thanks go to our operating partner, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and to the funding partners (Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education) who helped make the work of the Commission possible. We are especially indebted to Dr. Robert Weisbuch, president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation for his leadership and support. Chris Sturgis, program officer at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; Michele Cahill, senior program officer, Carnegie Corporation of New York; and Susan Sclafani, counselor to U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, all contributed to our thinking.

We want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our executive director, Cheryl M. Kane, in keeping us on task. Dr. Kane helped define the nature of our investigation, organized our work, and saw to it that we heard from school leaders and experts on American education, while insisting in the face of impossible deadlines and obstacles of all kinds that we could get the job done. We also want to recognize the excellent support we received from Stephanie Duckworth, Chris Becker, and Lisa Bush of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.

We appreciate the contributions of the senior advisers who provided substantive guidance throughout our work: Dr. James England, formerly of the Pew Charitable Trusts and now with the Education Commission of the States, and Dr. Robert Orrill, executive director, National Council on Education and the Disciplines. We are also grateful to the staff of the National Library of Education, particularly Vance Grant, statistician, who helped us to find and verify statistics in the report.

We are grateful to the education leaders who met with the Commission and gave us the benefit of their views. They are recognized in Appendix B.

Ed Ford, deputy secretary of the Executive Cabinet, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Kentucky, made enormous contributions to the work of the Commission. We are greatly in his debt.

We also want to thank James Harvey of James Harvey & Associates, Seattle, Washington for helping draft this report.

We offer special thanks to Policy Studies Associates, Inc., which provided substantive, editorial, and logistical assistance throughout this phase of the Commission's work. In particular, we are grateful to M. Bruce Haslam, Elizabeth R. Reisner, Michael Rubenstein, Üllik Rouk, and Kim D. Thomas. And we are grateful for the efforts of Shep Ranbom, Debbie Pickford, and Samuel Lubell of Communication*Works* in Washington, D.C. and their assistance with public affairs.

Appendix B

Meetings, Guests, and Speakers

Public Hearings

Jackson, Mississippi
February 6, 2001

Hosts	Guests and Speakers
Parents for Public Schools of Jackson	Governor Ronnie Musgrove, D-Miss Mississippi
National Parents for Public Schools	Reginald Barnes, Superintendent Cleveland School District
	Rebecca Fields, Counselor Madison Central High School
Mississippi Department of Education	Daniel Hogan, Vice President Raymond Campus, Hinds Community College
	Richard Thompson State Superintendent of Education
Public Education Forum of Jackson	Joe Haynes, Executive Director Jobs for Mississippi Graduates, Inc.
	Eurmon Hervey, Jr., Manager Delta Scholars
	Valerie Neal, English Teacher Pearl High School
	Jayne Sargent, Superintendent Jackson Public Schools

Sister Dorothea Sondgeroth, President
St. Dominic Health Services &
St. Dominic-Jackson Hospital

Maggie Wade, Anchor
WLBT TV-3 News

Sare Luster, Freshman
Rice University

Michael Goggin, Freshman
Harvard University

Curnis Upkins, Jr., Parent of the Year
Jackson Public Schools

Boston, Massachusetts
March 19, 2001

Education Resources Institute	David Driscoll, Commissioner of
Boston	Education, Massachusetts
Northeastern University	Richard Freeland, President
Boston	Northeastern University
Boston Higher Education	Joseph Bage, Superintendent
Partnership	Brockton Public Schools

Henry M. Thomas, III, President & CEO
Urban League of Springfield

Neil Sullivan, Executive Director
Boston Private Industry Council

Ann S. Coles, Executive Director
Boston Higher Education Partnership

Jennifer Kilson-Page, Associate
Executive Director
Boston Higher Education Partnership

James W. Fraser, Dean, School of Education
Northeastern University

Marjorie Bakken, Senior
Brockton High School

Chante Bonds, Senior
Brockton High School

Yessenia Paniagua, Senior
Brockton High School

Amagdalita Simon, Senior
Brockton High School

Shadae Thomas, Senior
Sabis International Charter School

Austin, Texas
March 23, 2001

Charles A. Dana Center
University of Texas at Austin

Susan Sclafani, Counselor to Secretary
U.S. Department of Education

Houston Independent School District,
Houston, Texas

Henry Cuellar, Secretary of State, Texas

Texas Business & Education
Council, Austin, Texas

Don Brown, Commissioner of Higher
Education, Texas

Hugh C. Hayes, Deputy Commissioner
Texas Education Agency

James Ketelsen, Founder
Project GRAD

Susie Miller, High School to University
Services, University of Texas Pan-American

Jeff Shadwick, President
HISD Board of Education

Frances Wawroski, Principal
Martin High School, Laredo, Texas

Felipe Alanis, Associate Vice Chancellor
University of Texas System

Richard Fonté, President
Austin Community College

Ray Marshall, Professor of Economics
University of Texas at Austin

Steve Palko, Member, Tarrant County
Workforce Development Board

Joe Randolph, Statewide Coordinator
Texas Scholars Program

H.G. (Pete) Taylor, Chairman
Military Child Education Coalition

Bowling Green, Kentucky
March 27, 2001

Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Karen Adams, Dean,
College of Education & Behavioral
Sciences, Western Kentucky University

Steve Gumm, Engineer
Barren County Schools

Ruth Ann Hammer, Teacher
Barren County High School

Lois Adams-Rodgers, Deputy
Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Education

Corey Goode, Student
Barren County High School

Megan Nunn, Student
Barren County High School

Abraham Williams, Director
Housing Authority of Bowling Green

Theron (Butch) Thompson, Faculty
Western Kentucky University

Linda Gerofsky, Station Manager
WKYU-PBS Television

Krista Seymour, Associate Producer
WKYU-PBS Television

Julia Roberts, Professor
Western Kentucky University

James Applegate, Vice President,
Kentucky Council on
Postsecondary Education

Pamela Burns, Middle School Teacher
of the Year
College View Middle School

Fannie Louise Maddux, Chair
Pritchard Committee for Excellence

Linda Miller, Director of Guidance
Jefferson County Schools

Portsmouth, New Hampshire
April 6, 2001

Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado

Susan Sclafani, Counselor to Secretary
U.S. Department of Education

Ed Ford, Office of the Governor
Kentucky

James England,
Distinguished Senior Fellow
Education Commission of the States

Milton Goldberg, Executive Vice President
National Alliance of Business

Cal Frazier, Distinguished Senior Fellow
Education Commission of the States

John Lewis, Chair
New Hampshire State Board of Education

Gen Olson
Minnesota State Senator

Ray Holmburg
North Dakota State Senator

Lamont Tyler
Utah State Representative

Mike Williamson, Deputy Superintendent
State of Michigan

Charles Hudson
Louisiana State Representative

Hazel Loucks, Deputy Governor
Illinois

Jeanne Shaheen, Governor
State of New Hampshire

Steve Reno, Chancellor
University System of New Hampshire

Marilyn Peterman
Best Schools, New Hampshire

FULL COMMISSION MEETINGS
Washington, D.C.
September 11, 2000

Ted Sanders, President
Education Commission of the States

David Zeiger, Director and Producer
Senior Year

Rochelle Nichols Solomon
Senior Program Director
Philadelphia Education Fund

Anthony P. Carnevale
Vice President for Public Leadership
Educational Testing Service

Honorable Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education

Washington, D.C.
October 30, 2000

Kati Haycock, Director
The Education Trust

Robert Steen, Vice President
Fleishman-Hillard Research

Great Barrington, Massachusetts
May 14, 2001

Simon's Rock College of Bard
Great Barrington, Massachusetts

Bernard F. Rodgers, Dean of the College
Simon's Rock College of Bard

Appendix C

Model Programs

The Commission thanks the many organizations that shared information about their programs and activities to help students prepare for further education and employment. Below, we have attempted to briefly summarize their efforts.

Programs to Improve Alignment

Aligning Writing Instruction in Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions

Virginia Beach, VA

Salem High School and Tidewater Community College in Virginia Beach, Virginia have entered a partnership to help high school students prepare for college writing requirements and reduce the need for remedial instruction in college. Together, the schools are working to improve student writing by developing and disseminating a model for effective staff development in writing instruction, and validating a multiple measures writing placement procedure.

For more information: Chris Jennings, director of the FIPSE Writing Grant Project, tcjennc@tc.cc.va.us

Project Write, Suffolk County Community College

Long Island, NY

High school and college instructors work together to prepare high school students for college-level writing. Together, they evaluate student writing portfolios and place students in appropriate writing courses at the college. The aim of the program is to place college freshmen into credit-bearing first-year college writing courses instead of non-credit developmental writing courses.

For more information: John Parbst, mailto:parbstj@sunysuffolk.edu

X files

Omaha, NE

This business-education partnership in Omaha, Nebraska, aims to place all students into the job marketplace with a portfolio, based on community skill standards, in which they showcase their skills and talents. An X file portfolio organizes students' school records and skill descriptions, and includes school transcripts, test scores, awards and honors, skill certificates, resumes, internship records, writing samples, letters of recommendation, school highlights, and other evidence that students are ready for employment. The program makes clear to students that employers care about their performance in school. Information learned in school has real-world applications, and earning potential is directly related to skills.

For more information: Gerald A. Hoberman, Chairman, Opportunities/Jobs/Careers, (402) 457-2607

The Clipper Project

Bethlehem, PA

The Clipper Project is a research and development initiative, investigating the costs and benefits of offering Web-based university courses to high school seniors. High school students who are accepted in Lehigh University's early admissions program are eligible to enroll in a Web-based version of one of the University's introductory courses.

For more information: http://clipper.lehigh.edu

Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)

Washington, D.C.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, GEAR UP aims to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The program provides two kinds of grants. Partnership grants support multi-year partnerships of colleges and low-income middle schools, plus at least two other partners such as community organizations, businesses, state or local agencies, or others. These grants increase college-going rates among low-income youth through comprehensive mentoring, counseling, outreach, and supportive services. State grants provide early college awareness activities, including awareness of financial assistance, and academic support through mentoring, counseling, outreach, supportive services, and scholarships.

For more information: www.ed.gov/gearup

Programs to Improve Achievement

Eastern Technical High School, Baltimore County Public Schools
Baltimore, MD
Eastern Technical High School requires all seniors to complete an independent research project and showcase portfolio to graduate. The Senior Independent Project (SIP), a year-long, interdisciplinary process, combines English skills with research focused on some aspect of the student's Career Major, such as Allied Health, Information Technology, Engineering, or Business Administration and Technology. Students compete for significant cash scholarships underwritten by Verizon Communications, one of the school's business partners, awarded for the best research projects and presentations. All students begin their portfolios in grade 9, and the process culminates in the senior year when students present their showcase portfolios during mock interviews conducted by representatives from local colleges, businesses and industries. The nationally recognized high school conducts Leadership Academies four times annually for educators who wish to see models of best practices for seniors
For more information: Robert J. Kemmery, Principal and Harry J. Cook, English Chair, www.easttech.org

Texas Scholars
Kilgore, TX
The Texas Scholars program is based on the belief that it is better to pass an academically challenging course than to get a higher grade in a less substantial class. To become Texas Scholars, students must pass the courses in a state-recommended high school program that concentrates on mathematics, science, computer literacy, and languages. Students who complete the program successfully receive special recognition at high school graduation, are eligible for college tuition grants, and may receive preference from employers when seeking jobs.
For more information: www.tbec.org/texas_scholars.html

Just for the Kids
Austin, TX
Just for the Kids is an initiative to raise academic standards and increase student achievement that focuses on training educators and the public to analyze school performance data, use the results to spur higher standards, and identify and use best practices.
For more information: www.just4kids.org

New Vista High School

Boulder, CO

Graduating from New Vista High School requires students to complete A or B work in applied technology, arts, foreign language, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students must also earn credits in an "Individual Student Path," which can be governed by the entrance requirements of a highly competitive college or by the requisites of further study in a technical occupation or the arts.

For more information: Rona Wilensky, principal, wilensky@bvsd.k12.co:us

ACT

Washington, D.C.

ACT provides programs and services to assist students as they get ready for college. It provides information about expenses and eligibility for federal aid, course offerings, campus visits and careers. ACT's Standards for Transition attempt to facilitate students' understanding of academic expectations as they move from middle school through high school and on to college. Another program, Work Keys, connects schools with business by measuring students' work-related skills.

For more information: Anna Stewart Critz, Director, critza@act.org

Far West EDGE, Inc.

Medford, OR

Far West EDGE (Energetic Designs for Growth in Education) trains high schools to implement a Senior Project program. The program requires all graduating seniors not only to meet the general district graduation requirements, but also to competently complete four additional requirements. These additional requirements involve students in selecting a research topic, designing and completing a physical project tied to some aspect of that research, compiling a portfolio that demonstrates their learning journey, and giving an oral presentation to trained judges with knowledge and expertise within the student's selected area.

For more information: www.seniorproject.net

Buhler High School

Buhler, KS

Students at Buhler High School begin developing their senior projects with the creation of a reflective student portfolio in which students look back on 11 years of school and assess their readiness for the coming year. They prepare both a "scholastic resume" and "an area of academic accomplishments" summary to help them connect their past education with their coming years in the "real world," be it college, work, or the military. In October, students participate in Senior Project Kick-Off Day, a half-day of presentations and counseling that guides the rest of their senior year. Groups of two to six students write formal proposals for their projects and by January dig into their research. Teams of English faculty score the research projects while students prepare for presentations to community and faculty boards. Students present their final projects on Senior Project Presentation Day, traditionally the last Friday in May.

For more information: John Knapp, Senior Project Coordinator, joknapp@usd313.k12.ks.us

Programs that Provide Education Alternatives

Sustaining the Future Through School-to-Career

This practical toolkit, issued in collaboration with 30 state and local chambers of commerce across the country, helps chambers team with local schools to enhance workforce development and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of chamber activities with schools.

For more information: www.uschamber.com/cwp

New Trier High School

Winnetka, IL

To keep seniors engaged in meaningful educational experiences and create an effective transition to the world beyond high school, the school implements a Senior Project and the Senior Institute. A Senior Project may involve students in community service, academic learning through research or fieldwork, career exploration, or the arts; the Senior Institute is a full day of activities and presentations on topics such as personal health management, self-advocacy skills, conflict resolution, money management, date rape, substance abuse, drinking, and other issues in life after high school.

For more information: Janis Dreis and Larry Rehage, senior project coordinators, dreis@newtrier.k12.il.us or rehage@newtrier.k12.il.us

GlobalQuest

Woolwich, ME

GlobalQuest offers select, highly motivated high school seniors the opportunity to spend the spring semester in a foreign culture, studying its economic, environmental, social, and cultural forces and increasing their understanding of the international and interdependent nature of politics and problems.

For more information: www.gquest.org

Lansing Area Manufacturing Partnership (LAMP)

Lansing, MI

LAMP is a model school-to-career initiative operated by the Ingham Intermediate School District, the United Auto Workers, and the General Motors Corporation. Six units of study integrate academic standards and employability skills within a manufacturing context. Students attend the LAMP classroom, housed in the UAW/GM Training Center in Lansing, Michigan, for 2fi hours every day during senior year. Certified instructors deliver a curriculum that blends classroom instruction, work-based learning, hands-on experiences, team projects, and interactions with UAW/GM personnel and mentors.

For more information: Kathy Tomlanovich, ktomlano@ingham.k12.mi.us.internet

Woodlands Individualized Senior Experience (WISE)

White Plains, NY

Students design and carry out their own senior projects in their field of interest through this national program. Most of the school day during the second semester is freed up for experiential learning projects that give students a trial run at career-oriented or college preparatory experiences. In exchange for academic credit, students must keep a daily journal detailing experiences, readings, interviews, research, and reflection, meet weekly with a mentor, do research, and make a final presentation, which is evaluated by fellow students, teachers, and community members.

For more information: www.wiseservices.org

Maryville High School Senior Program

Maryville, TN

The school operates three programs for seniors. Senior Inquiry assists seniors in creating a portfolio of accomplishments for admission to selective colleges. Students build their portfolios with service, job shadowing, presentations, and the reading and discussion of significant non-fiction works. Senior Transition addresses the needs of all seniors as they prepare for the next steps after graduation, emphasizing self-assessment and self-direction, team building, current issues, independent living and community service. Senior Independent Project allows seniors to identify and design their own program of studies under the guidance of a mentor. The school maintains a standing senior transition team made up of parents, teachers, and students; runs a parent-operated college and career counseling center; and offers several senior-specific activities including a day-long ethical decision-making seminar.

For more information: David W. Messer, Principal, dwmesser@ci.maryville.tn.us

Los Angeles Shell Youth Training Academy (SYTA)

Los Angeles, CA

SYTA is a cooperative education program designed to improve employment opportunities for South Central Los Angeles youth. The one-semester program provides occupational and employability skills training and structured workplace learning to 11th- and 12th-grade students. Students learn about requirements of today's workplace, get paid, receive on-the-job training for 12 to 16 hours a week for one semester, earn diploma credit, and have the opportunity to work with a workplace mentor who demonstrates job skills and models positive employee behaviors and attitudes.

For more information: Youth Training Academy Office, (323) 751-5050

Corporation for National Service

Washington, D.C.

The Corporation for National Service sponsors a number of programs that link service and learning. In schools, colleges, and community organizations, young people of all ages improve their studies, develop problem-solving skills, and incorporate the habits of good citizenship while improving their communities. The corporation recognizes students who have outstanding service records with scholarships, awards, and leadership opportunities.

For more information: www.nationalservice.org

Appendix D

Papers and Other Materials Prepared for the Commission

Barth, P., Haycock, K., Huang, S. and Richardson, A., *Youth at the Crossroads: Facing High School and Beyond.* Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2000.

Carnevale, A.P., *Help Wanted...College Required.* Princeton, NJ: Education Testing Service, 2000.

Cook, H.J., *Baltimore County Public Schools: Student Survey for the National Commission on the High School Senior Year.* Baltimore: Eastern Technical High School, 2000.

Haslam, M.B. and Rubenstein, M.C., K-16 *Alignment as a Strategy to Improve the Connection Between High School and Postsecondary Education.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2000.

Rubenstein, M.C., *The Future of High School Reform: The Emerging Consensus.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2000.

Rubenstein, M.C., *Transforming The Senior Year of High School: A Conceptual Framework.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2000.

Kirst, M.W., *Overcoming the High School Senior Slump: New Education Policies.* Palo Alto, California: Stanford University, 2000.

Steen, R.E., *Opportunities Missed: Reflections on Transitions from High School.* St. Louis, MO: Fleishman-Hillard Research, 2000.

Zeiger, D., *Senior Year: Voices of Fairfax High Seniors.* Los Angeles, CA: Displaced Films, 2000.

Appendix E

Notes

[1] National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1997.* NCES 98-015, Table 135, page 137. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1997.)

[2] See *Digest of Education Statistics, 2000* (NCES 2001-034), Table 141, page 156. (Actually, just 29 percent of seniors completed the full program laid out by the excellence commission — four years of English, three each of social studies, mathematics, and science, and half a year of computer science. Dropping the out-of-date computer science requirement permits analysts to reach the conclusion that 44 percent of graduates met the standards recommended in *A Nation at Risk*.)

[3] See, for example, *Education Indicators: An International Perspective* (NCES 96-003) by Nancy Matheson, et al., National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC, 1996, Tables 4 and 5, pages 33 and 36.

[4] Jodi Wilgoren, "Education Study Finds U.S. Falling Short," *New York Times*, June 13, 2001.

[5] Center for Educational Research and Innovation, *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, page 159. (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, June 2001.)

[6] *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, Chart C41, page 159.

[7] *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, page 13.

[8] Throughout this report, the Commission refers to "postsecondary education." That term normally refers to formal education and training available at two- and four-year colleges, technical institutes, corporate training programs, and apprenticeship training and other union-related educational opportunities. The Commission also uses it to include adult education and new distance-learning opportunities employing emerging technologies and the Internet. Throughout the world of postsecondary education, some programs offer degrees or certificates; others do not. The Commission includes all of them in its definition.

[9] Dale Mezzacappa, "Reading, Writing, and Race: Grappling with the Achievement Gap," a series in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 17 – June 19, 2001.

[10] By P-16 we intend to broaden the traditional notion of K-12 education (kindergarten through grade 12) to encompass preschool programs through four years of postsecondary education.

[11] Phillip Kaufman et. al., *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1999.* (Washington, DC: National Center on Education Statistics, 2000. NCES 2001-022.)

[12] See for example, *A Nation at Risk*, (report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), *Learning a Living* (report of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills – SCANS 1993) and *Spanning the Chasm* (report of the Business-Higher Education Forum, 1997).

[13] For a discussion of these issues, see *Redeeming the American Promise*, report of the Panel on Educational Opportunity and Desegregation (Atlanta: Southern Education Foundation, 1995).

[14] M. Bruce Haslam and Michael Rubenstein, *K-16 Alignment as a Strategy to Improve the Connection Between High School and Postsecondary Education.* (Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2000.)

[15] Patti Barth et al., *Youth at the Crossroads: Facing High School and Beyond.* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2001)

[16] Patti Barth et al., *Youth at the Crossroads: Facing High School and Beyond.*

[17] SREB Survey for "High Schools that Work," 1998.

[18] SREB Survey for "High Schools that Work," 1998 (survey of more than 26,000 teachers in 13 Southern states).

[19] Leon Botstein, *Jefferson's Children: Education and the Promise of American Culture.* (New York: Doubleday, 1997)

[20] These institutions, normally located on community and four-year college campuses, permit students to move back and forward freely between high school and college-level academic work.

[21] National Center for Education Statistics, January 2001.

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